

TURKEY AND TEHRAN TRAILS, (ZTI)

Istanbul to Tehran 17 Days, departing 5th April 2021



TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Istanbul to Tehran
Duration: 17 Days
Transport: Overland Expedition Vehicle
Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel 2 nights
 Multishare Hostel 5 nights
 Camping 1 night
 Basic Hotel 6 nights
 Camping without facilities 2 nights
Meals: Breakfasts x 3, Lunches x 3, Dinners x 3

Physical Challenge: ● ● ○ ○ ○

Your itinerary may include easy-paced day walks, bike rides, and other activities that are not too strenuous.

Lifestyle Challenge: ● ● ● ○ ○

This trip has a bit of everything. Some areas that you travel through may be physically challenging; for example you may be at altitude some of the time and you may be camping for several nights. The pace of the trip can be tiring at times and some facilities will be basic. However there will also be plenty of time to relax and some comfortable accommodation.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1 - Istanbul (5th April 2021)

Border Information: If joining in Istanbul, you will most likely enter Turkey at Istanbul Ataturk Airport (IATA code: IST).

There will be a pre-departure meeting at 10.00am - on arrival please look out for a note from your leader with more information about this important meeting. If you are travelling beyond Tbilisi, your tour leader will need to carefully check your visa situation for your entire trip.

The afternoon will be free to explore the many sights of the incredible exotic city of Istanbul, including the Grand Bazaar, the Bosphorus River, Hagia Sophia and the phenomenal Blue Mosque!

Please note that many of the optional activities will only be possible for those with extra time in Istanbul before the start of your trip with us - please contact your Sales agent if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Istanbul.

** Important note - do not bring any medicines containing tramadol, codeine, temazepam, morphine or opiates to Central Asia. These are illegal in all circumstances in most of Central Asia and you will risk arrest. If in doubt about a particular medicine, please do not bring it. See the notes at the bottom for more details. **

Accommodation: Golden Horn Istanbul Hotel

Day 2 - Gallipoli (6th April 2021)

This morning following breakfast we will depart Istanbul and begin our journey to the shores of Gallipoli.

After lunch we will get an insight into what happened between the ANZAC, Allied and Turkish forces during the first World War and have a guided tour of the Battlefields and Anzac Cove.

Day 3 - Selcuk (7th April 2021)

Today we will cross the Dardanelles by ferry and head to Helik where we will do a short tour of the Troy Ruins.

We will then continue onto Selcuk where we will be staying for two nights. In the evening we will have free time to explore the area or simply relax in one of the many cafes or tea bars which are great for people watching.

Day 4 - Selcuk (8th April 2021)

Today we will spend the day exploring the Ephesus Ruins and Terraced Houses.

Day 5 - Pamukkale (9th April 2021)

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Following breakfast we will drive inland towards the small village of Pamukkale. After lunch we will have free time to visit the thermal hot springs and traverse through the travertine pools and terraces.

Day 6 - Olympos (10th April 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we continue our drive south and aim to reach the popular beach town of Olympos by lunchtime.

We will have free time in the afternoon to relax or explore the local area.

Day 7 - Olympos (11th April 2021)

On the second day there will be plenty of time to explore and participate in optional activities, in the evening we will walk up to the Chimera Fire Mountain and toast some marshmallows.

Day 8 - Egirdir (12th April 2021)

After breakfast we will leave the beachside town of Olympos and make our way north.

We will have an included visit of Termessos on the way before continuing our journey towards Egirdir where we will find a good spot to bush camp for the night.

Day 9 - Goreme (13th April 2021)

We have an early start this morning to reach the small enchanting town of Goreme in the heart of the Cappadocia mountains.

In Goreme we will stay in a well-equipped hostel - please note that dorm beds are generally used here.

Day 10 - Goreme (14th April 2021)

Today is a full day to explore Goreme, including a tour of the enchanted valley of Cappadocia. There will also be an opportunity for a magical optional balloon ride over the valley during your time here.

Day 11 - Mount Nemrut (15th April 2021)

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Today is a drive day as we travel through the stunning landscapes in eastern Turkey towards the Kurdish town of Dogubayazit. We will aim to overnight close to Mount Nemrut this evening.

Day 12 - Lake Nemrut (16th April 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Another full drive day today however we will be rewarded with a beautiful campsite near Lake Nemrut at the end of the day with a bit of time to relax and enjoy the evening.

Day 13 - Dogubayazit (17th April 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will complete our drive to the Kurdish town of Doğubayazit. On arrival we will have an included visit to the Ishak Pasha Palace and enjoy the spectacular views of the surrounding landscapes and the nearby Mount Ararat.

Day 14 - Tabriz (18th April 2021)

Border Information: Exit Turkey at Gurbulak, enter Iran at Bazargan.

Today we will drive across the Iranian border to the city of Tabriz, where we will have free time to explore some of the sights of the old town.

Day 15 - Zanjan (19th April 2021)

Today we will continue our journey east to the small town of Zanjan, where we have free time to explore and possibly visit the fascinating historical laundry hall of Rakhathshor-Khaneh.

Day 16 - Tehran (20th April 2021)

Today we will have an included visit to the impressive Dome of Soltaniyeh, just outside of Zanjan. The 14th-century mausoleum is the 3rd largest dome in the world.

After our visit we will continue our drive to the buzzing and chaotic Iranian capital of Tehran.

Day 17 - Tehran - End Date (21st April 2021)

Border Information: If leaving in Tehran, you will most likely exit Iran at Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport (IATA code: IKA).

This morning we will have an included tour of the stunning Golestan Palace and the fascinating National Museum of Iran.

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Tehran. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight.

Please note that due to restrictions on citizens of the UK, USA and Canada being permitted to remain unaccompanied in Iran, we will only be able to book one extra night of accommodation in Tehran for these nationalities at the end of this trip. You will also be required to book an airport transfer in advance via your sales agent. Please ensure the correct dates for your plans are clearly stated on all your visa applications.

Accommodation:

ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

Drive Times

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

Accommodation and Meals Included

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564

A FEW RULES

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

ISSUES ON THE TRIP

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer-relations@dragoman.co.uk.

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

IMPORTANT NOTES

OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)
- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

EXPLORATORY TRIP WARNING - THIS IS A NEW TRIP FOR US!

Please note that all or part of this trip is a brand new itinerary, and is going through completely new areas for Dragoman. This is what we call an Exploratory trip, and it means that all the passengers on this trip will be the route's pioneers for the first season!

While we have thoroughly researched all aspects of this new route and put the itinerary together with the best of intentions, please note that your crew will be finding a lot of information out for us on the ground and will be playing a lot of things by ear. The itinerary may be altered in places where it becomes necessary and the drive times may differ significantly from the published estimates.

Most Exploratory trips will have slight or significant changes made to them after this first season, and frankly we would be very surprised if an Exploratory trip was to run perfectly to the published itinerary. Usually we find that this is rarely a problem but rather an exciting feature and that there are much more pleasant surprises in store than unpleasant ones. You will be immersing in the camaraderie with your crew and fellow travellers and give you the fantastic opportunity to shape the trip as a group.

However, the warning is sincere and this trip must be viewed as Exploratory - if this concerns you or you would rather stick to a tried-and-tested itinerary, then we recommend that you wait a year or two until we have this itinerary perfected following operating it many times, or of course to consider one of the more established trips in our extensive portfolio.

There will be numerous challenges on this trip including border delays, visa and paperwork delays, potential re-routing at short notice, lack of western facilities, road closures and other obstacles and unforeseen issues.

There is a risk of cancellation if the FCO advise changes (as of now the route is safe to travel all the way through).

West and Central Africa will test everyone's patience due to potential issues with obtaining visas. This is likely to lead to long delays in places where there may not be much to do. It may also be necessary to fly over some places which would be at your own expense.

This trip will have a higher level of participation compared to our other Dragoman trips and you will be required to help out with setting up camps, cooking etc. The campsites are also likely to be basic for much of the trip along with a high number of bush camps.

This will be a challenging trip and you must be fit in order to participate. If you have a pre-existing medical condition or any medical concerns you should check with your doctor prior to travel that this would be a suitable trip for you. You should also be aware that in the event of accident or illness, access to medical centres will be limited.

On the flip side, we'll be visiting regions and areas very rarely seen by Western travellers. Meeting people who have perhaps never seen foreigners. Enjoying the chaotic and buzzing cultures of West and Central Africa. And of course, the immense satisfaction of completing a classic adventure that only a handful of people ever get the chance to complete.

TURKEY NOTES

IRAN NOTES

IRAN NOTE

Alcohol and pork products are strictly forbidden in Iran and will be confiscated at customs by anyone attempting to bring it into the country. Please do not try to bring alcohol into the country under any circumstances - your leader will ask you to dispose of it before heading to the border.

Iran is a conservative Islamic nation and a strict dress code is enforced throughout the country. Any deviation from the dress code may have you refused entry at the border, or in trouble with the police or locals once inside the country.

Men must wear long trousers at all times - ankles must be covered, but short sleeved shirts are acceptable. Open-toe sandals are fine to wear for both men and women.

Women are required by law to wear long, loose-fitting clothing in public. You must also wear a headscarf (any colour you like, though you will find that local women usually prefer black) in public. There is no rule of the colour of your outfit as long as it is modest and includes a headscarf. Generally female travellers can wear the loose fitting long-sleeved shirts available in many Asian shops that reach down to the thighs - any type of trousers underneath is allowed as long as they cover your ankles. Women are able to wear open-toed shoes and sandals as long as their ankles are not showing.

Please note that any British, US or Canadian citizens that are flying into Tehran to start the trip will need to book an arrival transfer in advance, and this must be done through us according to Iranian law. We strongly recommend that people of these nationalities aim to arrive on the start date of the trip, but if you require pre-tour accommodation in Tehran this must be booked through us and only a maximum of one night can be applied for. All the above also applies to all British, US or Canadian citizens who are leaving in Tehran - you will need to book an airport transfer through us and only a maximum of one night of post-trip accommodation can be applied for if needed.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 2nd April 2020**